

Framework Concept



rainbowtrekkers

Bilinguale Tagesstätten
für Kinder von 1 bis 6 Jahren

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Train a child according to his way.
King Salomon, Jerusalem, 10th century BCE

“According to his way” means:
Every child must be raised as an individual.
Every shoe does not fit all feet.
Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, Frankfurt, 19th century



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1. Organizational Structure

1.1 Name

The rainbowtrekkers Kita gGmbH is a Cologne-based provider of bilingual (English-German) kindergartens. The *rainbow* in our name stands for the variety of children who visit our kindergartens. *Trekkers*, as in 'trekking', suggests that education is a continual, fluid process - a journey into life on which we accompany the children in our kindergartens.

1.2 Locations

Rainbowtrekkers operates three kindergartens in Cologne at the following locations:

- Lindenthal (Dürener Str. 394, 50935 Cologne)
- Junkersdorf (Ulrich-Brisch-Weg 1, 50858 Cologne)
- Widdersdorf (Unter Linden/Auf der Vierzig 2, 50859 Cologne)

In all three institutions we look after children from one to six years of age. We accept both nursery children (1 to 3 years) and kindergarten children (3 to 6 years) including pre-school children.

Our CEO and administrative office are located at Dürener Straße 220, 50931 Cologne, Germany.

1.3 Structure

All three institutions are each managed by one principal. In the two larger institutions, Junkersdorf and Widdersdorf, the principals are supported by deputies. The principals lead teams consisting of recognised pedagogical professionals, at times support staff and assistants, trainees, interns and housekeeping staff.

The institutions are divided into pedagogical groups, which in turn are led by their own group leaders. The size of the pedagogical groups and the number of children and professionals per group depend on local conditions (such as room layout) and on the developmental stages of the children.

The principals are led by the administration, who also manages the institutions and assumes all employer-related responsibilities. The administration's team consists of four full-time positions: Managing director, personnel manager, secretary and pedagogical coordinator.



1.4 Self-organisation

To coordinate the pedagogical work, **team meetings** of all educational staff take place weekly or every 14 days in all three institutions.

In order to further develop teamwork, the individual teams undertake team-building measures as required. Several times a year, during the closing days of the institution, the administration and principals also organise educational **Team Days**, which can be both institution-related and interdisciplinary.

The leaders of our institutions meet monthly to exchange pedagogical information in the so-called **LM** ("Leader-Meeting").

Our so-called **MM** ("Management Meeting") also takes place monthly. Here, the educational managers from the institutions have the opportunity to get involved in the work of the administration and to help shape decision-making processes for the strategic orientation of rainbowtrekkers.

Our motto is: We are all rainbowtrekkers, but our institutions are individually shaped by the people who work in them. That's why each of our kindergartens has its own pedagogical concept, which describes the specifics of the respective location and which we would be happy to make available to you if you are interested.



2. Mission Statement

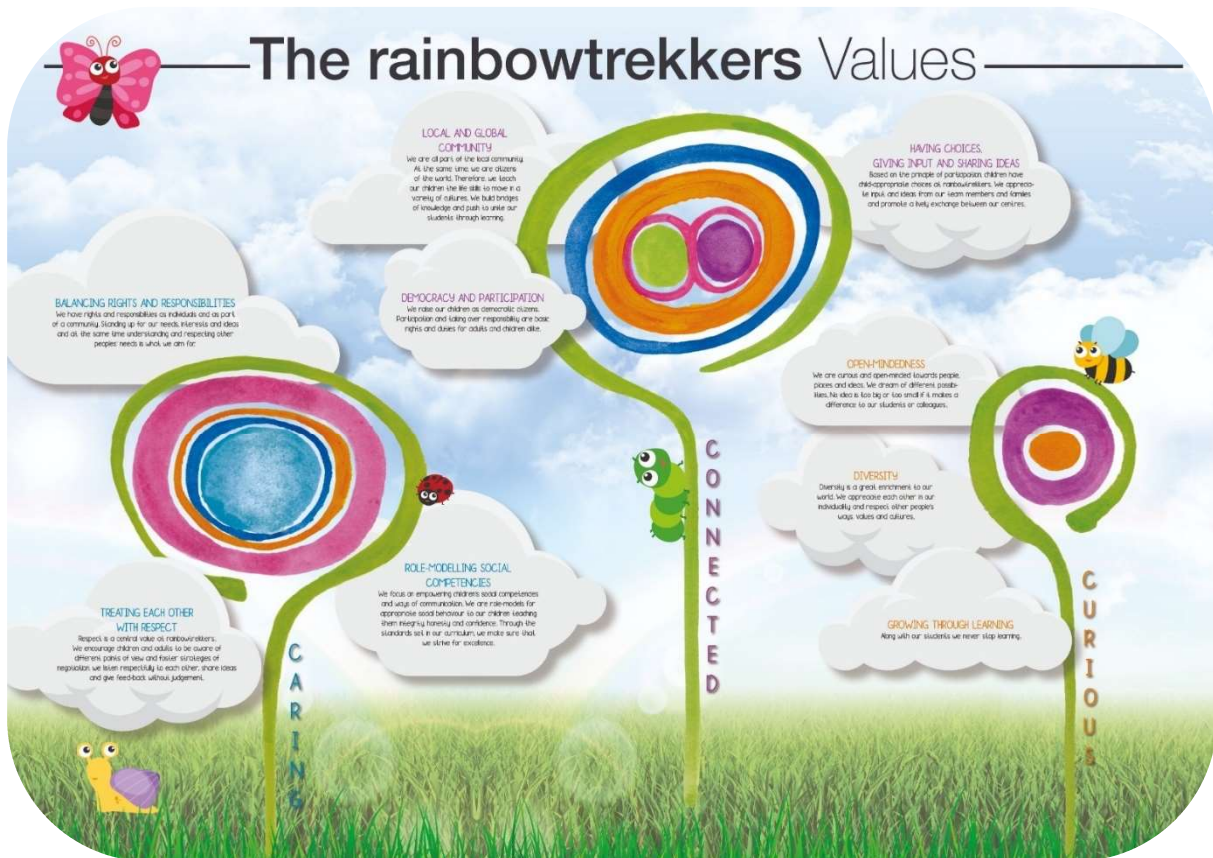
Our educational model is based on the assumption that children learn particularly well through direct practical encounters with people, objects, experiences and ideas. During this active learning process, we encourage children to explore the world around them in a playful way. Learning and development are anchored through trusting relationships with carers who support the children in their learning experiences.

Rainbowtrekkers believes that every child is unique and people continue to learn throughout their lives. We create an environment that encourages children to live out their uniqueness so that they can internalize and embrace the feeling that "I am good as I am". At the same time, we want the children to develop an open attitude towards others.

Since the world is in a constant state of change, we want to strengthen the children's ability to successfully master their lives in this world. The children are to be strengthened in their personality and receive different strategies from us to be able to develop a relationship with other people. The human being is a social being and needs the community of other people in order to lead a happy and fulfilled life.

2.1 Values

People feel that their work makes the most sense the more their activity corresponds to their own personal values. In a joint process with all team members, we have therefore considered which values shape us most at rainbowtrekkers:



We have illustrated the results of this team process in the above presentation, which is displayed as a poster in our institutions. They read:

- **We are curious** and open to others. We respect the individuality of each individual and continue to develop.
- **We belong together**, because we are both a part of our small kindergarten community and citizens of this world. That is why children learn to move in a variety of cultures. We see social participation and the assumption of responsibility both as rights and duties for children and adults.
- **We are empathetic** by defending our needs, interests and ideas while respecting the needs of others. Rights and responsibility belong together. We expect adults to be aware of their responsibilities as role models. We give each other feedback and promote conflict resolution strategies.



2.2 Diversity

Since its foundation in 2006, rainbowtrekkers has stood for human diversity among children and employees, which is also expressed in the fact that we have included the rainbow as a sign of diversity in our choice of name. Long before it became fashionable in business to "show one's true colours," rainbowtrekkers had positioned itself as an employer that ensures equal opportunity for all employees regardless of their national, cultural, religious, sexual, or health background. Most recently, a 2019 sample showed that our approximately 50 employees come from 12 different countries of origin. The majority of the children cared for by us come from mainly monolingual German-speaking parents, but at least a large minority from mixed-language parents, including English, Turkish, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, Greek, Croatian or Hindi as another language.

For us, this human diversity is not a world view or an end in itself, but simply a fact to be valued. Diversity finds its limits where our values described above are not shared as a community or where they are reduced to absurdity in the name of diversity. No one should have a disadvantage or an advantage because they belong to a particular social group. Diversity also ends in our kindergartens where egalitarianism begins. We do not want to turn the other into a second "we".

For us, diversity is rather based on the dialogical principle of the German-Jewish philosopher of religion Martin Buber, according to which every human being needs a counterpart who is different from themselves, so that they can define themselves in contrast to one another. Without being different no true encounter is possible - or in the words of the Israeli author Ester Golan:

Encounter with the Other

Who do I meet if not the other?

We meet each other. But we meet in our otherness.

I need the other to see me.

I hope the other needs me so that they can be seen and see themselves in that way.

We need each other to perceive each other.

Each one must preserve their own self. Who am I if I am not me.



2.3 Goals (Mission)

At rainbowtrekkers, the focus is on learning and growing up in a culturally diverse environment characterised by linguistic diversity. The aim is to promote children's open-mindedness and respect for others and to develop their own individual identity. The development of social skills and the awakening of the joy of lifelong learning are also important to us. At the same time, we strengthen the rights of the children and acknowledge them in their entirety.

We aim to teach children life skills that go beyond specialist knowledge. We also see each child in their entirety: emotionally, physically, relationally, intellectually, creatively and spiritually. The children should develop the courage to accept future challenges in life. In the sense of participation, they have the choice to take part in activities. The learning environment is well thought-out and well equipped so that the children can pursue their interests. We also pay attention to both types of communication (verbal and non-verbal). Since we are a multilingual institution, one of our main focuses is the promotion of the German and English language. We also attach great importance to promoting the children's sense of belonging and the right to make mistakes. Our experts support this process with an encouraging attitude towards the children.

At rainbowtrekkers we have a so-called "eclectic" approach, i.e. our approach consists of different pedagogical action concepts from all over the world. Our pedagogical work is based on these ideas.

We value the constant challenge of reflecting and implementing current scientific research and educational philosophies. We firmly believe that diverse perspectives and pedagogical approaches enrich our teaching and help us to meet the needs, interests and abilities of our children.



3. Curriculum

We see our students as young world citizens who actively and curiously explore their environment, who form ideas and hypotheses about how the world works, and who reexamine and adjust their ideas based on newly acquired knowledge.

Strong relationships between all stakeholders are the single most important foundation of learning. Our educators work tirelessly on building and maintaining relationships based on trust, respect, and care—not just with the children, but with *everyone* in the rainbowtrekkers community.

This spirit permeates our entire learning framework and develops children who are confident, balanced, and knowledgeable.

Our daily work is driven by the children's interests and curiosity. At the same time, we look at our students' futures. If a group of children is interested in everything about dinosaurs, for example, our educators find meaningful learning experiences to connect this interest with our framework and the areas of knowledge we have identified. Such learning experiences could, for example, encourage children to use and expand their vocabulary when talking about dinosaurs.

They could also encourage mathematical thinking, i.e. comparing sizes and shape or could give children the possibility to draw, enact, or mimic dinosaurs. There are countless other examples, of course, and these are made visible in each of our institutions.

At rainbowtrekkers, we have decided, precisely because of our international approach, to align our educational program primarily with the local curricula ("educational principles") of North Rhine-Westphalia. From our point of view, this does not only make sense because the majority of the children who attend our kindergarten centers transfer to the German regular school system when they start school. Rather, we see the alignment with the educational principles of North Rhine-Westphalia as a clear signal of appreciation for the comparatively holistic educational approach compared to other countries. Unlike in the school sector, we have the luxury in our daycare centers that learning can take place out of intrinsic motives and not out of pressure to perform. We would like to preserve this freedom.

In the educational principles of North Rhine-Westphalia, this holistic approach is described thus:

Children want to make a picture of the world for themselves. No one else can do this for them. Seen in this way, education is self-education. Self-education is to be understood as an individual process that includes personal, room and material factors. Children learn and educate themselves through what they perceive with their own senses and experience in a social context. Through this, they open up their environment, construct their images of the world and give them a subjective meaning.

Children do not educate themselves by merely taking over ready-made knowledge and skills from others, but only when they deal with them themselves. They form themselves in the encounter and in the confrontation with other people and different situations.



Education is thus a process that exists in the context of the child and its environment. The child's individual developmental prerequisites are always at the center of this process. Knowledge of a child's strengths, interests and needs as well as his or her perspective are the starting point for successful educational processes. They are holistic in nature – and many people are involved in them: Parents, professionals and teachers, other caregivers, other children and adults. They all [...] have an important role model function.

In educational processes, children must be given sufficient time to find their own rhythm and their own learning paths: Educational processes are thus highly individual. As children grow older, targeted pedagogical support takes on greater importance, without the basic principle – the active child – losing any of its significance.

In order to present the educational processes in their thematic, content-related focal points and characteristics, they have been divided into ten educational areas:

1. Movement
2. Body, health and nutrition
3. Language and communication
4. Social and (inter)cultural education
5. Musical and aesthetic education
6. Religion and ethics
7. Mathematical education
8. Scientific and technical education
9. Ecological education
10. Media

It must be taken into account that these areas can only in theory be separated from each other, but in practice they necessarily overlap in many cases: Children do not choose educational subjects according to a system of categories, but rather on the basis of their interests and the individual opportunities they have in their everyday lives and experiences.

In this respect, the content-related delimitation of educational areas follows the mental logic of adults rather than the way a child actually learns. This presentation serves to mentally structure the variety of experiential possibilities. The educational areas listed do not claim to be complete or universally valid. They are intended to help professionals examine their own practice to determine whether the child is actually given sufficient opportunity to experience comprehensive and fundamental educational and experiential processes. Thus, the educational areas are open for further development processes and individual adaptation in our facilities on site.



4. Language acquisition

Language is taught immersively, integrated into everyday life and according to the principles of translanguaging. Detailed information on the cognitive principles and practical application can be found in our [☞ Language concept](#).

5. Inclusion

Our kindergartens are run on the principle of inclusion. Detailed information on this can be found in our [☞ Inclusion concept](#).

6. Observation & documentation

Observing and documenting are the basis of reflective pedagogical work. Observing children also means paying attention to children, i.e. seeing things in this world from the perspective of the specific child and trying to understand the child in his or her entirety. At the same time, it serves as a critical reflection of our role as adults/educators. The aim of educational observation and documentation is to record and understand the actions and developmental status of the child as objectively as possible, without being influenced by our own subjective perceptions and value judgments.

As a provider of kindergarten services, we claim to support our professionals in constantly reflecting and questioning their observations. For this reason, it is desirable that any educator does not carry out his or her observations alone, but exchanges ideas with a colleague at all stages.

Observation and documentation should be seen as a process that goes through several phases. It begins with a thorough planning of the observation. This is followed by the implementation, documentation and interpretation of the findings and, if necessary, a consequence, e.g. a support measure or intervention, a decision or an educational offer.

Our pedagogical documentations are based on free observations and on the educational app of KitaPLUS. The educational areas on which the app is based correspond to the educational areas of the NRW educational principles (see chapter 3 above).

Based on our observations and records, we create a written development report for each child at the end of the daycare year.

In addition to the development discussions, we work with portfolios. The word portfolio is composed of the two Latin words "portare" ("to carry") and "folium" ("leaf") and refers to a collection of documents. Thus, a collection of personal documents is to be created for each



child. The child is given the opportunity to help shape the portfolio itself, be it through painted pictures, handicrafts or written work.

7. Family centers

Our kindergartens are run and certified as Family Centers according to the NRW guidelines. Detailed information on this can be found in our [Family center concept](#).

8. Parents

8.1 Settling-in

The settling-in process in our kindergartens follows the “peer” concept. Detailed information on this can be found in our [Settling-in concept](#).

8.2 Structuring relationships

Learning is a multilateral process. Parents' observations and assessments are important for educators so that they can understand the child better and more quickly. And through the observations of the educators, parents can gain an understanding of how their child behaves in group situations. This exchange helps us all to respond better to the child and encourages parents and educators to work in partnership for the benefit of the child.

Parental work at rainbowtrekkers is characterized by openness and transparency. This allows the family system and the kindergarten system to come closer together. We attach great importance to respectful communication between parents, principals and pedagogical professionals.

8.3 Information, Participation und Advice


In principle, parents' evenings are held several times a year in all institutions during the course of the day-care year. Important information is passed on, organizational matters are discussed, the settling-in period is explained in detail and many other topics are dealt with. In addition, each institution creates individual newsletters. In addition, various festivals are held every year, which the professionals celebrate together with the parents and their children, for example a lantern parade or a summer party. The parents also receive a daily verbal report from the pedagogical professionals on how their child's day was.



At the beginning of each day-care year, the parents' council is elected. The Parents' Council articulates parents' needs, supports the organisation of special activities and the organisation of community life in the kindergartens.

The parents can approach the employees at any time with questions and concerns. This is possible orally as well as in writing. The parents should contribute their ideas, wishes or suggestions at any time. It is very important to us that the parents not only feel that their children are in good hands, but also that they feel comfortable. Children are sensitive and they sense when their parents have difficulties dealing with professionals.

9. Child protection

Information on issues of child protection you will find in our  Child protection concept.

10. Participation, complaint management and representation

10.1 Participation

We understand participation primarily as the involvement of children in everyday processes. In our child protection concept (chapter 7 "Prevention through participation"), we describe in detail how we organize everyday life in our kindergartens in a participatory manner.

We also see it as our task to regularly reflect on the quality and degree of participation. This is done as part of our pedagogical self-evaluation with the help of the survey tool "Topkita". The questionnaire of "Topkita" is based on the 20 quality areas of the National Criteria Catalog. Questions on children's participation are an integral part of this. If, when drawing up the quality profile of a particular kindergarten, a need for improvement becomes apparent in the subcategories of

- Involving children in decision-making processes,
- Involvement of children in design processes,
- balance between individual and group,

then these are documented, implemented and tracked in a structured procedure. Needs for improvement become apparent on the basis of the team profile if

- a majority of the team answered the questions with "not at all/never; rarely; now and then/partially" or if
- the spread of answers is very broad, i.e., no clearly positive trend can be discerned.



10.2 Complaint management

We regard complaints as an opportunity for constructive feedback, which gives us the opportunity to further develop and reduce sources of error. For this reason, complaint management is part of our quality development.

We define a complaint as a statement or notification of an undesirable situation or misconduct. By complaint management we refer to the planning, implementation and control of measures that we undertake in connection with complaints with the aim of resolving the cause of complaint for the benefit of all parties involved.

The complainants can be parents, employees or children. For each complaint type (parent complaint, employee complaint, child complaint), we have defined thematic categories from which it is derived who is responsible for handling which complaint, as well as which information duties and which appeal instances exist. The processes are described in detail in our QM manual.

In our child protection concept (chapters 7.3 to 7.8) we have described in detail how we encourage, record, process and reflect on children's complaints in our kindergartens. In addition, we are currently examining the use of child survey tools (e.g. TopKita) to determine child satisfaction.

10.3 Self representation

The self-representation structures at rainbowtrekkers are a contribution to agile, self-responsible self-organizing units in the sense of an integral organization, in which all participants act as human beings, can develop strengths and abilities and experience meaningfulness. Within the framework of these self-representation structures, the interest groups involved in the daycare system (children, staff, parents) are included in a participatory manner in the information and decision-making processes that affect them.

- **Parent representatives**

The classic body of self-representation in the kindergarten sector are the parent representatives. We see our parent representatives as an important link between the principal and the families. One of their tasks is to represent the interests of the parents and to discuss the parents' wishes, suggestions and proposals. We are also happy to count on the support of the parent representatives in organizing excursions, celebrations or community events. (Legal basis: Kibiz NRW § 10 Abs. 3 - 5)

- **Staff representatives in the kindergartens**

The task of the staff representatives is to represent the interests of the staff in the sense of an appreciative "all-party" attitude in the respective kindergartens. "Multi-partiality" means understanding and representing the concerns and expectations of all employees, even if these may contradict each other. The work of the staff representatives is based on the principles of mediation. The staff representatives have the right to discuss or moderate topics that fall within their area of responsibility as



part of the regular team meetings at their facility. Elections for staff representatives take place at the beginning of each year.

- **Staff representative committee**

The staff representatives from all our kindergartens together make up our staff representative committee. The staff representative committee has the right to invite the management or other representatives to a meeting at any time. The management has a duty to hear the employee representatives at these meetings. There is also an obligation to provide information, provided that this is not in conflict with any third party interests worthy of protection under data protection law. The staff representative committee has the right to send a representative as a guest auditor to the meetings of the management meeting, the agenda of which includes items relating to employee interests.

- **Kindergarten council**

The Kitarat is made up of equal numbers of two elected parent representatives, two elected staff representatives and two representatives of leadership/management. It works on the basis of the Kibiz NRW § 10 para. 6. The members of the council of the day care center cooperate closely in the all-round effort to realize the tasks of the kindergarten in mutual recognition of common responsibility. The kindergarten council discusses in particular the principles of the educational work, the spatial, material and personnel equipment and the admission criteria.

- **Children's parliament**

As a result of the revision of Social Code Book VIII, procedures for self-representation have been put into place in the early childhood daycare settings in Germany. These structures are intended to support children in expressing their needs, interests, wishes and complaints, and in this way to familiarize them with democratic processes at an early age. This is why we have a children's parliament in all of our facilities. On a managerial level, our principals work together with children and staff to develop "rules of procedure" that define the rights and duties of the young "parliamentarians".



11. Quality management

11.1 Internal Evaluation

Our pedagogical processes as well as all associated management and support processes in our kindergartens and on a management level are subject to a quality audit by external auditors. Since the 2021/22 daycare year, we have been certified according to PQ-Sys. PQ-Sys is the quality system of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband (based on Din EN ISO 9001:2015).

Since the kindergarten year 2022/23, the work of our pedagogical teams is regularly evaluated externally by the Topkita Institute.

11.2 Internal Evaluation

Part of the external certification are annual internal evaluations based on the National Criteria Catalog for Pedagogical Quality in Day Care Centers for Children (NKK) using the Topkita survey tool. The quality areas formulated in the NKK directly address the actions of pedagogical professionals. They range from rooms for children to language support and bilingual education to criteria for cooperation between management and the team. These criteria serve as a professional orientation framework for us.

The internal evaluation within the framework of the QM certification also includes our regular parent surveys and staff surveys on job satisfaction. The results are statistically evaluated anonymously.

On the part of the organization, an evaluation meeting is held with the principals regarding the parent surveys and an evaluation meeting is held in the respective team regarding the staff surveys.

The statistical key figures on employee and parent surveys, sickness rates and accident figures can be viewed transparently by all employees of the organization via the intranet.

Through the structured comparison of actual and target figures, we check compliance with our own standards as well as the fulfillment of legal and professional pedagogical requirements. The knowledge gained from this helps us to initiate and maintain quality-promoting processes.

11.3 Knowledge management and further training

With the help of our digital QM system, we contribute to active knowledge management between employee generations in the long term. All important educational and organizational processes are described in detail in it. It covers the topics: Organizational Structure, Pedagogical Mission Statement, Pedagogical Work on Children, Recurring Events in the Annual Course, Leadership in the Pedagogical Field, Complaint Management and Support Quality.

In addition, practical topics such as first aid, illnesses, hazardous substances, hygiene, fire protection, instruction, accidents, and violence and terror are covered.



There are clear job descriptions for all pedagogical areas.

In addition to internal training events ("Team Days"), all employees have the right to further training with external providers or sponsors as part of our training program. Each employee has a fixed financial and time budget for this purpose.

As part of our language acquisition program, we also provide financial support for our employees to achieve bilingualism (German-English) up to level B2 of the European Framework of Reference. In this way, German-speaking employees can improve their English language skills and English-speaking employees their German language skills.

11.4 Reflection and professional consultation

In the pedagogical field, self-reflection is one of the most important competencies of the actors involved.

Another quality-assuring measure is therefore the provision of event-related supervision by a pedagogical coach for individual teams in difficult phases. Pedagogical professionals can receive individual coaching from an external consultant if they are interested and need it, in order to better work out their strengths.

In addition to the regular staff appraisals, we also conduct event-related feedback meetings. Conversely, regular feedback to the superior manager is, of course, also part of the process.

We also have access to expert pedagogical advice (Fachberatung) from the German Daycare Association (Deutscher Kitaverband).